

**Anders Aarum**
Shakin' Our Souls**Never too comfortable**

To Anders Aarum, a split personality can actually add to the magic. *Shakin' Our Souls* proves the point, feeling like three albums blended into one: On the one hand, it offers driven, classically schooled jazz. On the other dreamy beatscapes propelled by pulsating grooves. And thrown in for good measure, there's also the occasional excursion into atmospheric electronics. Aarum won't even decide which instrument to focus on: Rhodes, Moog or just the piano? Thankfully for the listener, he just cannot decide.

Clear delineations have never been Aarum's thing. As an in-demand session musician, he's dabbled his feet in a wide range of styles. He's played downtempo electro with soul chanteuse Beady Belle; free jazz with the iconic Sonny Simmons; as well as eccentric folk with Guro von Germeten. Whatever he touches instantly becomes personal. Even the instrumental backing tracks he recorded with his band for Randi Tytingvåg's „Let Go“ were so distinct that they were later released as a stand-alone album without the vocals.

During his collaboration with neo-disco queen Bertine Zetlitz, Aarum met Erik Holm, who now plays percussion on four of the pieces on *Shakin' Our Souls*. At the heart of his ensemble, however, is the brother axis of Ivar and Magne Thormodsæte. Their subtle, yet subversive swing provides the backbone for Aarum's elegant, cosmic solos – possibly best exemplified by eight and a half minute long "It's Raining", which slowly rises from silence, then gradually becomes more dense, building up intensity with each bar.

Moments like this are typical for an album that feels like a roller coaster ride. Curiously, one of the highlights of the trip is a standard: Ornette Coleman's "Una Muy Bonita". Would Coleman have enjoyed this playful, almost casual rendition? One thing's for sure: Neither he, nor Aarum ever found any satisfaction in making the listener feel too comfortable for too long.